



# Mito C. Gribovski

DEC 18, 1939 - MAY 15, 2023



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## **Mito C. Gribovski**

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**M**ito Gribovski passed away on Monday, May 15, 2023, from complications of cancer. He had hope to the last and held strong till his body could no longer hold on. Christened Mito, he went by many monikers – Vujko, Vuki, Mićo, Mito, Mike. However you called him and however you knew him, you knew this was a man with a big heart. Mito was born in Porodin, a small village in Macedonia. Mito, his mom, Vesa, his father, Kirste, and younger sister, Jovanka, lived a happy life until Kirste passed away, and then it was just the three of them, where their lives were often a struggle. At 9 years old, Mito was forced to quit school and begin working in the farm fields to help support the family. For three years, he toiled from dawn to dusk, until eventually he was able to return to school, where he excelled and completed three years of school work in one year. He had dreams of becoming a veterinarian. But the communist government at the time ruled over decisions such as what education you could get, and he was denied veterinary school. This was the beginning impetus for Mito to leave his homeland, where his dreams of helping animals was denied. Education was important to him, so he got his technical degree in agriculture. After graduating, he was posted near the Greek border in southern Macedonia, where the plan to escape was born. He befriended the border guards and learned that the dogs can't track people in the rain and that the guards stayed cozy warm in their guard house during rain. A few months later, under the cover of darkness and a blanket of rain, Mito and a friend dared an escape across the border into Greece, where they were captured and taken to prison and then transferred to a migrant camp near Athens. There, Mito spent the next two years waiting for entry to America. Finally in America, he started working and established a base for himself among the Macedonian community he found in Detroit, Michigan. He found employment with Chrysler, and began to enjoy the abundance that America had to offer. Eventually, he brought his sister and mother to America, and from there, with



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an expanded family in tow (Jovanka had married and had two children by then), the family moved west to California, where they settled in Fresno on farms right next to each other. Here, Mito was able to have his animals – cows, goats, chickens, rabbits, geese, pigeons, dogs. He tended to his fruit and vegetable gardens. He made a mini Eden there in Fresno. To support themselves, Mito, his sister, and brother-in-law bought a restaurant, Mayfair, and the people loved him and his food. They sold that business, and bought The Sandwich Nook in downtown Fresno. The people loved him and his food. They sold that business, and bought the operating rights for the small café at the Air National Guard. The people loved him and his food. Looking to be closer to family and an extended community of Macedonians, Mito and the family (which had grown to one more nephew) moved to Escondido. Having bought two houses next door to each other, Mito and his sister created another mini Eden for the family. Here, he again established his gardens – fruit trees, peppers, tomatoes. And throughout the years he had his animals – dogs, chickens, doves, rabbits, a tortoise, and the various wild animals that would visit him in his backyard (he was Dr. Doolittle). His work life in Escondido had its ups and downs, but one job brought a fall and an injured shoulder that never healed and eventually he could no longer work. But God had plans and the silver-lining was that Mito was able to be at home and take care of his mom after she had a stroke. He always thought of it as his privilege that he could be there for her. Though he had tried marriage a valiant three times, these relationships were not to be and he never had children of his own. His children were his niece and nephews, their friends, and then their children. He showered all these children with love. Through all the hardships and difficulties, Mito never lost his ability to love and to hope, to enjoy life and to appreciate the beauty and miracles this world has to offer. He had the greatest love for his mother and sister, for his niece and nephews and their children, who were like his grandchildren. Though Mito could be cantankerous and feisty sometimes, his humor and forgiveness and grace came through, and no one who knew him ever had any doubt of his kindness, his loving heart, his sincerity, his joy. The world is a sadder place without this beautiful man in it, and those of us who knew him mourn him and miss him beyond any words. Vujko, you will always be remembered, you will always



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be loved. Rest in peace now with your mother and father, grow your bountiful gardens, and be in joy with all the animals that flock to your loving heart.

Mito is survived by his sister, Jovanka Ilic; his niece, Christine Ilic Raymond, her husband Philip, and their children, Alastair and Beebit; his nephew, Boris Ilic, his wife Laurie, and their children, Mallaurie and Alissa; his nephew, Alex Ilic, his wife Tanya, and their children, Aleksandra and Anastasia; his dog children, Milo and Alfred; and his many friends.

Mito loved animals, so in lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the San Diego House Rabbit Society at [sandiegorabbits.org](http://sandiegorabbits.org), or to the tortoise rescue, Sulcata Rescue Ranch, at [mysulcatarescue.org](http://mysulcatarescue.org).

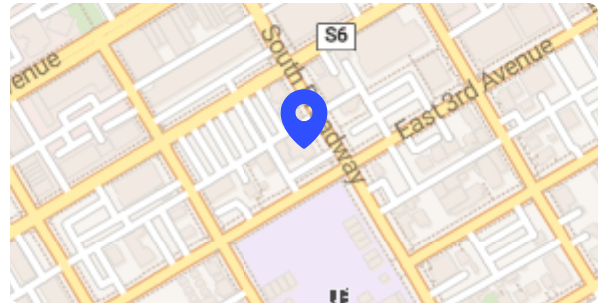


# Events

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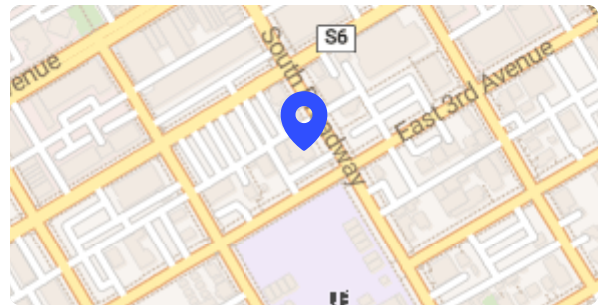
## Visitation

- Thursday**, May 25, 2023
- 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM PT
- Alhiser-Comer Mortuary**  
225 S Broadway, Escondido CA 92025



## Prayer Service

- Thursday**, May 25, 2023
- 7:30 PM PT
- Alhiser-Comer Mortuary**  
225 S Broadway, Escondido CA 92025



## Graveside Service

- Friday**, May 26, 2023
- 11:30 AM PT
- Oak Hill Memorial Park**  
2640 Glenridge Rd, Escondido CA 92027-4532





## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** sent a Serene Reflections Bouquet to the Gribovski family.

May 24 at 11:47 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Gribovski family.

May 24 at 5:39 AM



**Dan Dragan** posted:

Mike was a wonderful person. I met with him regularly as I walked my dogs the last 3 years. Everybody in the neighborhood knew Mike as he walked many miles every day. He had so much energy and he gave lots of advice. He loved all animals including my 2 dogs. He especially looked forward to Have Milo spend time with him. He knew the wild rabbits in the area. He named them and recognized their faces. Amazing!! He loved his tortoise, Spike, whom wandered into his yard one year. He would forage for certain types of weeds to feed him. There are so many stories that defined his character but the most important thing that made him so proud was his family. Though he didn't have kids of his own he loved his mother, sister, niece and nephews and their kids. He often shared stories of his family.

May 20 at 6:52 PM



**Gloria Bunting** posted:

After reading his obituary I see what a wonderful man he must have been. Jovanka and Christine my heart goes out to you as you miss him so much. Love and prayers for all of the family. Gloria Bunting

May 19 at 12:42 PM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Mito by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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